

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/ARN:MDRAPER:GCB/PDW
APPROVED BY INR - H SAUNDERS
IO:RBARRY
S/S-O:TGMARTIN
NEA:NAVELIOTES

-----069690 320007Z /66

O 312219Z MAR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
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EXDIS, FOR AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PBOR, PBOF, PEPR, LE, IS, XF

SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: COMMENTS BY BOUTROS

REF: BEIRUT 1763

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1. WHILE WE CAN UNDERSTAND THE CONCERNS AND FRUSTRATIONS
BOUTROS SHARED WITH YOU, WE BELIEVE WE MUST CONTINUE TO TAKE
A FIRM LINE WITH HIM, SARKIS, AND OTHER LEBANESE LEADERS
REGARDING CERTAIN ESSENTIAL STEPS THE LEBANESE MUST TAKE.
TO THE DEGREE THAT WE CAN, WE WILL WANT TO ACCOMPANY OUR
EXHORTATIONS WITH PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS AS TO HOW NECESSARY

LEBANESE MOVES CAN BE CARRIED OUT, ALONG WITH DESCRIPTIONS OF THE SUPPORTIVE ACTIONS THE US AND UNIFIL WILL ALSO TAKE.

2. OUR BASIC UNDERLYING THEME SHOULD BE THAT THE UNIFIL OPERATION OFFERS THE ONLY REAL PRESENT HOPE THAT THE SITUATION IN LEBANON CAN BE STABILIZED IN A WAY THAT PROTECTS THE NATIONAL INTERESTS OF THE REPUBLIC. THEREFORE, THE LEBANESE WILL HAVE TO TAKE RISKS IN SUPPORT OF THE UN ENTERPRISE. THE SITUATION IS INHERENTLY UNTIDY, AND MANY LOOSE ENDS SIMPLY WILL NOT BE TIED UP PROMPTLY OR IN ADVANCE.

3. CONDITIONAL ENTRY OF THE LEBANESE ARMY: YOU SHOULD DISSUADE BOUTROS (ON SATURDAY) AND SARKIS (WHEN YOU SEE HIM ON MONDAY) FROM MAKING UNIFIL NEUTRALIZATION AND OCCUPATION OF TYRE, NABATIYAH AND BEAUFORT A CONDITION FOR LEBANESE ARMY PARTICIPATION IN THE SOUTH. YOU SHOULD POINT OUT THAT WALDHEIM PLANS TO MAKE TYRE UNIFIL HEAD-QUARTERS AND A MAJOR PORT OF ENTRY. WHILE IT MAY BE PREMATURE TO TAKE THIS STEP WHILE MANY HEAVILY ARMED PALESTINIANS ARE BREATHING DOWN THE NECKS OF THE HIGHLY EXPOSED FRENCH TROOPS THERE, IT REFLECTS THE THRUST OF UN POLICY. CONTROL OF THE PORT WILL PLACE IMPORTANT MILITARY AND LOGISTICAL CONSTRAINTS ON ARMED PALESTINIANS IN THE AREA, AND WILL CONSTITUTE VITAL ASSERTION OF GOL/UN AUTHORITY.

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4. AS FOR NABATIYAH, WE HAVE HOPES THAT THE SYRIANS COULD BE PERSUADED TO MOVE INTO THIS AREA ONCE THE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL HAS OCCURRED. THE U.S. WILL BE PURSUING THIS OBJECTIVE. IN THIS CONNECTION, YOU SHOULD MENTION GEN. GUR'S COMMENTS IN MARCH 31 JERUSALEM POST. HE SPOKE IN FAIRLY POSITIVE TONES ABOUT A SYRIAN MOVE TO THE LITANI. FOR THE MOMENT, BEAUFORT MAY BE IMPOSSIBLE TO SECURE PENDING A BUILDUP IN UNIFIL FORCES. CITE AGAIN THE STRONG U.S. EFFORTS TO KEEP THE SCOPE OF THE UNIFIL MANDATE FROM BEING INTERPRETED TOO STRICTLY.

5. YOU SHOULD ALSO MAKE THE POINT STRONGLY THAT THERE IS NO WAY THE TROOP CONTRIBUTORS CAN BE PERSUADED TO TAKE HIGH RISK ACTIVITIES WITH THEIR MEN IN THE ABSENCE OF DIRECT LEBANESE ARMY AND POLICE INVOLVEMENT WITH UNIFIL OPERATIONS. ADVANCE AND LIAISON UNITS SHOULD BE SENT ASAP, WITH MAJOR UNITS TO FOLLOW THEREAFTER IN COORDINATION WITH UNIFIL.

6. YOU MIGHT MENTION WE HAVE IN MIND AN IDEA WHICH WE MIGHT URGE UPON UNIFIL, AS SOON AS WE HAVE ADDED INFORMA-

TION AND, WE HOPE, LEBANESE SUPPORT. IDEA IS TO LAND AT LEAST A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF THE NEPALESE (OR SENEGALESE, WHICHEVER ARRIVES FIRST) CONTINGENT AT RAYAK, AND HAVE THE LEBANESE ARMY'S BEKAA UNIT STATIONED AT RAYAK JOIN WITH NEPALESE UNIT AND MOVE DOWN BEKAA TO HASBAYAA AND EASTERN SECTOR OF ZONE BEING FORMED BY UNIFIL. WE WOULD NEED ANY UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ON CONDITIONS AT RAYAK AIRFIELD, INCLUDING ABILITY TO HANDLE HEAVY AIRCRAFT, UNLOAD EQUIPMENT, ETC. MOST OF THE ROUTE TO HASBAYAA IS CONTROLLED BY THE SYRIANS, WE UNDERSTAND. WHILE AREA SURROUNDING HASBAYAA IS CONTROLLED BY PALESTINIANS, WE UNDERSTAND TOWN ITSELF IS LARGELY FREE OF PALESTINIAN PRESENCE AS A RESULT OF AGREEMENT REACHED WITH TOWNSPEOPLE. IF HASBAYAA COULD

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BE ENTERED AND SECURED JOINTLY BY LEB ARMY AND UNIFIL-- AND WE RECOGNIZE THAT PALESTINIANS WILL OBJECT AND POSSIBLY OPPOSE BY ARMED FORCE--IT WOULD SECURE AN IMPORTANT LOGISTICS ROUTE FOR LEBANESE ARMY AND UNIFIL. CAST THIS IDEA IN SUCH A WAY THAT THE LEBANESE WILL NOT SEIZE UPON IT AS A WAY OF DELAYING LEBANESE ARMY DEPLOYMENT STILL FURTHER.

7. PLEASE CONVEY TO BOUTROS AND SARKIS OUR CURRENT JUDGMENT THAT, WHILE WALDHEIM DOES NOT WANT THE UNIFIL TO MOVE NORTH OF THE LITANI FOR THE MOMENT, WE BELIEVE HE WOULD BE OPENMINDED ABOUT OTHER MOVES LATER, AFTER THE INITIAL STAGES OF THE UNIFIL OPERATION HAD BEEN COMPLETED. WE COULD NOT, OF COURSE, PREDICT WITH ASSURANCE THAT THE UN WOULD BE WILLING TO EXTEND CONTROL THROUGHOUT THE NO-MAN'S LAND ABOVE THE LITANI BUT THERE MAY BE PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS, INVOLVING SYRIA, THAT COULD BE WORKED OUT.

8. WE AGREE WITH WALDHEIM THAT UNIFIL SHOULD NOT MOVE ABOVE THE LITANI UNTIL THE AREA BELOW THE LITANI HAS BEEN SECURED BY UNIFIL (AND LEBANESE ARMY UNITS). THE EXCEPTION TO FURTHER UNIFIL ADVANCES BEYOND PRESENT IDF MIGHT BE TO HASBAYA (SEE ABOVE), WHICH DOES NOT INVOLVE "CROSSING THE LITANI."

9. AS FOR THE PROBLEM OF HADDAD, WE WOULD BE WILLING TO DISCUSS WITH THE ISRAELIS ANY SPECIFIC LEBANESE ACTION EXERTING CONTROL OVER HADDAD. BETTER YET, THE IDEA MIGHT BE BROACHED DIRECTLY WITH THE ISRAELIS VIA THE LEBANESE OFFICER BEING ASSIGNED LIAISON DUTIES AT NAQURAH. ANY PUBLIC ACTION WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO MAKE CLEAR THAT HADDAD WOULD NOT BE PUNISHED. PERHAPS A LEBANESE STATEMENT LIKE THE FOLLOWING, COORDINATED WITH HADDAD AND
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ISRAEL IN ADVANCE, COULD BE MENTIONED: "LEBANESE ARMY HEADQUARTERS HAS RESUMED DIRECT COMMUNICATION BY RADIO WITH COL. HADDAD. HE AFFIRMED THAT HE REMAINED LOYAL TO THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT. ONCE THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT HAS REESTABLISHED ITS AUTHORITY IN SOUTH LEBANON, COL. HADDAD WILL TURN OVER HIS COMMAND TO A REPLACEMENT FROM THE LEBANESE ARMY AND WILL RESUME HIS DUTIES ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY IN A RESPONSIBLE POSITION."

10. AS FOR THE IRAQI AND OTHER REINFORCEMENTS, EXPLAIN THAT THE US AND OTHER GOVERNMENTS HAVE BEEN PRESSING THE SYRIANS TO GET THIS MATTER UNDER CONTROL AND SENSE THERE HAD BEEN AT LEAST PARTIAL SUCCESS. WE AGREE THAT BOUTROS (AND EVEN SARKIS) MIGHT HAVE TO GO TO DAMASCUS TO GET BETTER SYRIAN COOPERATION. IN VIEW OF FRANGIE'S CLOSE CONNECTION WITH THE SYRIANS, COULD HE BE ASKED TO WEIGH IN?

11. AGAIN, AS REGARDS REINFORCEMENTS, THE ATTITUDES OF THE MARONITE LEADERS ARE ALL IMPORTANT. YOU SHOULD SAY THAT YOU WILL CONTINUE TO WEIGH IN WITH THE CHRISTIANS, AND WITH JUMBLATT, TO KEEP UNDER CONTROL THE PROSPECTS OF NEW INCIDENTS IN CENTRAL LEBANON WHILE THE UNIFIL EFFORT IS IN SUCH A SENSITIVE STAGE.

12. THE QUESTIONS POSED BY BOUTROS REGARDING THE ISRAELI ATTITUDES TOWARDS THESE REINFORCEMENTS WERE RHETORICAL AND UNANSWERABLE. OUR VIEW REMAINS THAT THE ISRAELIS GENUINELY WANT TO WITHDRAW FROM SOUTH LEBANON UNDER CONDITIONS REASONABLY FAVORABLE TO THEM AND WE ARE CONFIDENT THEY WILL DO SO. THE ISRAELIS WILL NOT, HOWEVER, LIVE WITH CONTINUED ROCKETING AND SHELLING BY THE PALESTINIANS AND, AT A MINIMUM, THEY WILL PROBABLY EMPLOY COUNTER-BATTERY FIRE AND AIR ATTACKS. THE PALESTINIANS SHOULD BE URGED THROUGH ALL APPROPRIATE CHANNELS TO STOP THIS MILITARY ACTIVITY, AND THE LEBANESE SHOULD USE THE ARGUMENT--EVEN IF THE US DOES NOT--THAT THE ISRAELIS MAY
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NOT WITHDRAW WHILE ROCKETS AND ARTILLERY FIRE CONTINUE.

13. AS FOR WHAT THE U.S. IS PREPARED TO DO TO ASSIST LEBANON IN THE CRISIS BOUTROS SAYS THE COUNTRY IS FACING, YOU SHOULD MAKE CLEAR THAT US SUPPORT FOR LEBANON'S INTEGRITY AND ITS GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN FIRM AND VISIBLE. WE WILL CONTINUE TO CONSIDER EVERY PRACTICABLE MEANS OF

HELPING LEBANON AND PROTECTING ITS MOST VITAL NATIONAL INTERESTS. THE MOST IMPORTANT ADDED ASSET THE LEBANESE NOW HAVE IS THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE PROBLEM WITHIN LEBANON. TO A SIGNIFICANT DEGREE, THE UN AND ITS PEACE-KEEPING CAPACITIES ARE FACING A SEVERE TEST. IT IS NOT A TEST THAT THEY WILL WILLINGLY FAIL. MANY RESOURCES CAN BE DRAWN UPON. ALSO WORTH NOTING IS THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE FRENCH, WHO HAVE HAD SPECIAL HISTORIC TIES TO LEBANON. WE BELIEVE BOUTROS SHOULD SHARE HIS CONCERNS WITH THE FRENCH AS WELL, TO MEASURE THE EXTENT OF THE FIRM SUPPORT LEBANON IS GETTING. COOPER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TROOP DEPLOYMENT, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING FORCES, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE083531
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: MDRAPER:GCB/PDW
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780141-0270
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978031/aaaaaawr.tel
Line Count: 235
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: baf380b7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 BEIRUT 1763
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3096564
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOUTH LEBANON: COMMENTS BY BOUTROS
TAGS: PBOR, PGOV, PEPR, MARR, LE, IS, XF, UNIFIL, (BOUTROS, FU'AD GEORGES), (PARKER, RICHARD)
To: BEIRUT
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbcs://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/baf380b7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014